

Shrewsbury Schools cancellation policy

When school is canceled because of weather conditions, notification will be given, usually no later than 6:00 a.m., to these television stations channels-4, 5, 7 and radio stations-WXLO FM 104.5, WTAG AM 580, WSRS FM 96, WBZ AM 1030.

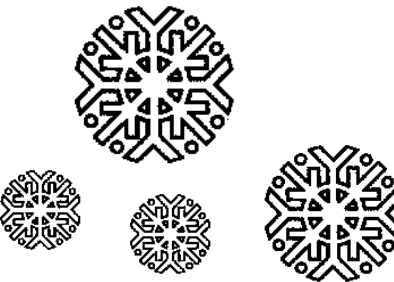
Delays

If there is an early morning safety factor, the School Department may announce a **one hour delay** of the opening of school . The announcement will be made on television and radio stations listed above, usually no later than 6:00 a.m. If this plan is in effect, starting times would be as follows:

- 8:25 a.m.– **High School**
- 8:45 a.m.– **Middle School**
- 9:15 a.m.–**St. Mary’s, Montessori**
- 9:30 a.m. –**Coolidge, North Shore/Parker Road**
- 10:00 a.m.–**Beal/ECC, Floral Street, Paton, Spring Street, Beal West**

Cancellation of afternoon sessions for kindergarten/pre-school
It may be necessary to cancel the afternoon sessions on days when bad weather conditions develop during the morning. Please listen to the radio stations listed above for notification of cancellation. The announcement will be made no later than 11:30 a.m.

Information about school delays or closings may also be found on the district’s website <http://www.ci.shrewsbury.ma.us/schools.htm>



Winter Parks & Recreation registration

8 a.m., January 4th at Town Hall

School snow scene



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SHREWSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The former Artemis Ward School still stands as a building on the property of Spag’s 19.

Expansion project at the Parker Road Preschool

MARY LAMMI
DIRECTOR OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Parker Road Preschool, which is an integrated preschool program for typical children and children with special needs, is expanding its facility through a construction project begun in early December 2002. Due to the projected annual student growth rate of 13%, the expansion project was approved by Town Meeting members during the annual Town Meeting last May. This will add five new classrooms and additional therapy space to the facility.

The Parker Road Preschool currently houses three integrated classrooms, two specialized classrooms, three therapy rooms, a nurse’s station, three administrative offices, and a staff lunch/meeting room. The preschool runs nine half-day sessions of preschool, which includes a two-day morning session, three-day morning session, and four-day afternoon session.

Enrollment for typically developing children is determined through a lottery process held in February. Families pay tuition for their children to attend. Children with special needs are placed according to their Individual Education Plans and are provided with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Although pre-school is optional for families with typically developing children, it is a requirement of every school district to provide special education to children with special needs by their third birthday. It is also a requirement that, when appropriate, the special education be provided through an inclusion model where children with special needs learn along side their typically developing peers. The regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education Special Education state:

The school district shall ensure pro-

grams are available for eligible children three and four years of age. Such programs shall be developmentally appropriate and specially designed for children aged three and four years. The school district shall ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who do not have disabilities, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with special needs from the general education program occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and service cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Last school year, at a ratio of 8:7, the Parker Road Preschool exceeded its maximum capacity of students. With a total of 116 classroom slots, enrollment reached 127. This school year, it is projected that enrollment will reach 156. In order to plan for this increase, the school district opened a fourth pre-school classroom, temporarily housed at the Spring Street Elementary School. This has allowed for 39 additional preschool openings, 12-14 of which are designated for children with special needs. Once the construction project is completed, that classroom will be moved to the Parker Road Preschool as one of the new classrooms. The school district had also moved the offices of the Special Education Department out of the Parker Road facility last year to create more classroom and therapy space for students. This move is intended to be temporary as well, with plans to have the Special Education Department back at Parker Road by September 2003.

The design of the expansion includes five new classrooms, a new main entrance and reception area, therapy spaces, and a waiting area for parents who bring their children to the pre-school to receive only speech

therapy. The design also includes renovations to the existing facility in order to meet the needs of the special education department. New parking lots and an access road around the building are also part of the design. Kaffee Kang of Kaffee Kang Associates, the architect for the building, described the project as follows:

The ultimate design goals of the new addition have been functionality and cost effectiveness. The new main entrance with a reception area provides a single controllable point of entry for parents and visitors. New speech therapy rooms are clustered near the reception area for easy access. Each of the five new classrooms has large windows to let in natural light, a combination of carpeting and vinyl tile to accommodate different types of activities, a children’s sink, and direct access to child-sized toilet facilities. Maintenance-free exterior materials have been selected to ensure the Parker Road Preschool appears presentable to its neighbors and the Shrewsbury community.

The school district expects that the expansion will meet the needs of Shrewsbury’s pre-school-aged children far into the future, thus allowing for the quality of education that is so needed at this young age. Providing early intervention is such a crucial component to a special needs child’s development and can only be done effectively if a program is given the right supports.

“Walking through the door of the preschool building, you get the feeling that children are always at the heart of the decision making process. Knowing that the town is supporting the expansion only strengthens this feeling. I am so excited for this expansion and what it can add to our program,” said Jennifer Roxo, preschool teacher.

Meet your bus driver

KELLY DONAHUE
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR

A lot of you know her as Debbi, Mrs. Carroll or just simply as the driver of Bus 9. Debbi Waite, a resident of Shrewsbury, drives a school bus for Laidlaw Transit.

Seven years ago Debbi decided that she wanted to spend more time raising her children and less time working. After leaving her career as a Diabetes Researcher at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center she began her search for a new job that would allow her the opportunity to earn a supplemental income and spend time with her children. What better way, she thought than to take a job as a school bus driver?

Debbi has three children: Billy, James, and Victoria. Victoria rides with her most of the time. She just turned four and is very happy about that. Before driving a school bus, Debbi worked at the University Massachusetts Medical Center, starting off in the Molecular Genetics and Microbiology lab then finally as a Diabetes Researcher. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Yale University and a Ph.D. in Immunology from Tufts University.



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE
Debbie Waite and her daughter Victoria Carroll take a break from delivering students to school.

When asked to talk about one of the biggest challenges she faces as a school bus driver, she responded that getting out of bed on a winter morning is incredibly difficult because it’s so early and extremely cold. She starts her day off with the high school run at 6:30 a.m., then proceeds on to the middle school, next she picks up

students for Paton and Beal, and transports students for mid-day kindergarten.

“In the afternoon I start all over again bringing them home - high school, middle school, and elementary school,” says Waite. “I have a good group of kids which makes it all worth while.”